A SYNOPSIS
ON

IMPLICATIONS OF UBIQUITOUS TECHNOLOGY DEVICES ON WORK LIFE CONFLICT: A STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF INDIAN IT AND ITES EMPLOYEES

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Implications of Ubiquitous Technology Devices on Work Life Conflict: A Study on Perception of Indian IT and ITes Employees

Introduction:

Work life balance implies prioritizing one's work activities as well as life activities at the same time. Work activities such as ambition and career are very important for an individual. But life activities such as family, hobbies, health and self-care also hold an equally important place in an individual's life. But in today's competitive era, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to maintain equilibrium between work and life activities; because of challenges like long working hours (Pocock et al., 2007), role overload (Higgins & Duxbury, 2003) and technological advancement (Batt & Valcour, 2003). This imbalance between work and family can even lead to hazardous consequences like job dissatisfaction (Thomas and Ganster, 1999; Hughes and Bozionelos, 2005), turnover intentions (Ghiselli et al., 2001; Blomme et al, 2010) and physiological and psychological illness of the employees (McNaughton, 2001). Failing to address the problems of imbalance between work and other life aspects has been identified as resulting in detrimental social and economic consequences (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008).

To perform better and effectively, individuals in the organization need to be fully prepared for challenges. These challenges in turn create enormous stress, thereby creating a disorder in employees' work as well as family life (Malik et. al., 2010). Moreover, such pressures are amplified because of the advancement of technology and electronic gadgets. On the one end of the continuum, technology is facilitating people to do their things better and faster, and also providing them the option to complete their work/ projects at home. And on the other extreme, it has created a virtual work-place, which forces people to be at work even when they are at home, with family, or any important social occasion like marriages, parties or annual function of their child's school.

So it becomes imperative for the researcher to undertake survey so as to know the work life conflict of Information Technology Industry professionals, and pin point the negative impacts of excessive use of Ubiquitous Technology devices such as mobile phones, laptops, palmtops etc. on work life conflict and other negative outcomes, if any and appraise problem areas or grey areas which may need immediate or long term measures for their recuperation.

Work life balance in Information Technology Industry:

The traditional 4 M's are the basic inputs required in any organization, whether it wants to produce goods, or render services. And these 4 M's are Men, Money, Machines and Materials. But it is the manpower that makes an organization, a success or a failure. So the importance of human factor cannot be neglected. This fact gets even more prominent in the service industries like IT industry owing to the special characteristics like intangibility, perishability, variability, and inseparability (Kotler, 2010). Today, the pressure and stress on the IT employees has increased manifold, and the reasons are advancement in technology, the need for quick responses, real-time processing, and the importance given to consumer services etc. The current work scenario is marked by the fast pace of change, intense pressure, constant deadlines, changing demographics, increased use of technology and the co-existing virtual work place (Sharma and Bhatnagar, 2010). Because of the above mentioned problems and grey areas, employees of the IT industry are experiencing longer work hours, more work life conflict, and higher indices of burnout than their coworkers in other functional areas (McGee, 2003). For instance, a survey by "CIO research reports" (2001) done on technology workers reveal that 50% of the respondents felt that they achieved less work life balance than their counterparts in other functions, and 58.3% of IT employees report that they do not feel they have an appropriate balance between their work lives and their personal lives. In addition, another study by Leyden (2003) indicates that 71% of IT managers feel that burnout in IT employees is a significant issue facing organizations; while 94% of networking professionals point out that they work in crisis mode at least some of the time (Fischer, 1998). These statistics demonstrate that the increasing demands of today's work climate are creating chaos in the lives of IT professionals. It also suggests that learning to manage this conflict is an important challenge faced by managers and HR professionals aiming to retain valuable IT workers.

Ubiquitous Technology devices and Work life conflict:

Technology's presence in the lives of employees is far more pervasive in today's scenario, than it was in the past. Cascio (2002) suggests that 50 million workers use computer every day along with other products of the digital age – faxes, modems, cellular phones and email. Technology that rests at the fingertips of many workers is capable of performing almost all the strategic tasks of managers and professionals. This anytime – anywhere connectedness of employees to their work, co-workers, supervisors, customers and other stake holders blurs the

influenced family lives at home, and has also contributed to a break-down of the boundaries that once stood between work and family (O'Mahony and Barley, 1999).

Organizations feel that the use of technological tools like computers, e-mails, or the use of devices like cell phones after hours can make work more efficient. But from employees' perspective, Ubiquitous technology makes them perform extra work activities and extend their normal work day. United States Department of Labor (2001) says that this penchant for extending one's work day is commonly driven by the employee's need to finish incomplete work or perceptions that it is simply the "nature of the job". But this need of finishing the incomplete work has the potential of invasion of the work life into family and life domain, and thus, is capable of initiating a dysfunctional cycle. When a person performs work activities at home, he / she is not readily available, either psychologically or physically, to pursue those responsibilities deemed to be of importance in the family and life domain.

Ubiquitous technology devices and other negative work outcomes:

Despite some positive consequences of Ubiquitous technology utilization, metaphorically, the utilization of such devices can become a "double-edged sword" for employees. On the one hand, the advantages of being connected can increase one's work satisfaction because one can be more productive and solve work-problems as they arise, even while away from the work site, or after work hours. Yet these positive aspects of Ubiquitous technology can become negative when people engage excessively with electronic devices. Excessive Ubiquitous technology usage can become problematic when it is used at the expense of other activities needed for employee recovery and leisure, or when Ubiquitous technology usage competes with other family-related obligations or the personal life domain (Sonnentag, 2001). For example, Lynch (2000) proves that people using Ubiquitous technology devices excessively often perceive a lack of personal connectedness. Collaboration via technology such as e-mails and mobile phones may lead to feelings of isolation or lack of contact with other employees (Harpaz, 2002). This perception of isolation may drive negative psychological outcomes (Anderson & Anderson, 2003). However, as Matusik and Mickel (2011) found, individuals also interact with family members, friends, and individuals outside of the organization through Ubiquitous technology. Thus usage can also have negative consequences if those who interact with employees leverage social pressure on employees to not use the technology after hours. Thus work life conflict may result if employees' technology device usage interferes with participation in the family role or if usage violates the expectations of family,

6	Parental Dissatisfaction	Kinnunen and Mauno (1998)
7	Societal Dissatisfaction	Kinnunen and Mauno (1998)
8-9	Psychological and physical illness	Thomas and Ganster (1995); Sparks et al. (1997); frone et al. (1997); Martens et al. (1999); Vallone and Ensher (2001), McNaughton (2001); Felstead et al. (2002), Bohle et al. (2011)
10	Chronic Fatigue	Bohle et al. (2011)

Research gap:

Although there have been several researches on work life conflict, and it has been heavily investigated for past many years, but studies on relationship between WLC and Ubiquitous technology devices are lacking in India. Secondly, a clear research gap is also evident in the WLB literature, where only a small number of studies focused on finding the associative relationship between Ubiquitous technology devices and Work Life Conflict (Riley and McCloskey, 1996; Beasley, Lomo-David, and Seubert, 2001; Hill, Ferris and Martinson, 2003; Sullivan and Lewis, 2001; Duxbury and Higgins, 2003; Perrons, 2003; Zimmerman, 2003; Quesenberry & Trauth, 2009). Otherwise, in the past, most researchers had supported the contrast relationship of technology tools and work life balance. In fact, some researchers have pointed out that "despite the increasingly rapid adoption of technological devices in organizations, research on the negative consequences of technology use is in many respects in its infancy" (Day et al., 2010). And lastly, it is proved in some researches that Ubiquitous technology devices create work life conflict, but use of technology may also create many other negative outcomes, like job stress, job dissatisfaction, job burnout, lower productivity, physical and psychological health problems, marital, parental, and societal dissatisfaction in IT employees. These outcomes are still overlooked in literature. In other words, the magnitude of its harmful impacts is still untouched.

Hence, to mitigate these research gaps, the researcher proposes to study the impact of Ubiquitous technology usage on work life conflict in IT industry of India. IT industry was selected for this particular study, as IT professionals are generally most prone to use technology devices excessively. Moreover, the researcher investigates from the literature, the

A pilot survey was conducted at the initial level of the study, to know whether the IT indust professionals of India are really facing problem in maintaining their work life balanc Another question regarding the research was that whether the Ubiquitous technology device like laptops, palmtops, and blackberry are creating work life imbalance, or acting as facilitator? A convenience sample of fifty IT Industry professionals was selected for persona interview and short survey. This sample constituted of 28 males and 22 females. Th researcher tried to maintain equilibrium in age (<30 = 22; 30-50 = 24; and above 50 = 04 and marital status (29 = Married, 21 = unmarried) also, to make the sample heterogeneous Analysis revealed that most of the IT employees (82%) were dissatisfied with their work life balance, but only married employees with children (52%) consider technological tools as the main reason or antecedent for work life imbalance. Interestingly, unmarried people, with age less than 30, considered technology as a facilitator in maintaining work life balance, rather than a hindrance. This outcome was consistent with the fact that employees now entering the workforce are "technology friendly", and are called "digital natives" (Benett et al., 2008; Deal et al. 2010; Palfrey and Gasser, 2010; Prensky, 2001). Thus, for this above-stated reason, only married IT employees, with children was selected as the research sample. The researcher also tried to investigate other negative outcomes of technology devices from the respondents through probing, and stress, work overload, poor health, fatigue etc. were few of the problems mentioned by the respondents. Some respondents said that because of too much use of technological gadgets, they are unable to take care of their children properly, give time to their family even after being present at home, and especially to their health care, which sometimes lead to poor physical and mental health. They have to attend official calls late night, and even when they are on leave etc. Afterwards, these outcomes were categorized into 10 negative WLC outcomes by the researcher.

- *Proposed hypotheses and the proposed Model:*

Following are the proposed hypotheses and the proposed model (Figure I):

Hypothesis 1: Use of Ubiquitous technology devices is positively related to work life conflict.

Hypothesis 2a: Work life conflict is positively related to Psychological symptoms.

Hypothesis 2b: Work life conflict is positively related to Chronic fatigue.

Hypothesis 2c: Work life conflict is positively related to Poor physical health.

- *Measures:*

All the constructs used in the study, and sources of their measurement scales are listed i Table 2:

S.No.	Construct	Scale adopted by	Likert scale	No. of items in scale	Cronbach' Alpha
1.	Use of Ubiquitous technology	Diaz et al. (2012)	5-point	2	.671
2.	Work life conflict	4-items Scale by Kopelman, Greenhaus and Connolly (1983), and 1 item from Frone et al., (1992). Gutek, Searle, and Klepa (1992) and Grant H. Fenner (2006) used combined scale	5-point	5	.771
3.	Job stress	Marlin workplace stress scale, (2005) [Partially adopted]	5-point	4	.831
4.	Job burnout	Gillespie Numerof Burnout Inventory (1984)	7-point	10	.782
5.	Job dissatisfaction	-	5-point	1	-
6.	Lower productivity	-	5-point	1	-
7.	Marital dissatisfaction	Kansas marital satisfaction scale (1986) [Modified]	7-point	4	.820
8.	Parental dissatisfaction	Gerris et al. (1993) [Partially adopted]	5-point	1	-
9.	Societal dissatisfaction	-	5-point	2	.695
10.	Psychosomatic symptoms	GHQ-12 Scale by Goldberg and Williams (1988)	5-point	12	.880
11.	Poor physical health	-	5-point	1	-
12.	Chronic fatigue	Bohle et al. (2011)	5-point	1	-
13.	Reduced job performance	Farh, Dobbins and Cheng (1991)	5-point	3	.749

Table 2: Detail of constructs used in the study and their Cronbach's alpha values

- *Sample and data collection:*

A convenience sample was drawn from managerial and professional employees of the Information Technology Industry located in major cities of India, like Bangalore, Pune Gurgaon, and Kolkata. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire. Though

its negative work outcomes was found by regressing each dependent variable separately on work life conflict (Hypothesis 2a to 2j). The results are shown in the table 3:

Hypothesis	Relationship	R^2	Standardized β	P
H2a	Work life conflict – Psychosomatic symptoms	.432	.657	$p < 0.01$
H2b	Work life conflict – chronic fatigue	.241	.491	$p < 0.01$
H2c	Work life conflict – poor physical health	.193	.439	$p < 0.01$
H2d	Work life conflict - job Burnout	.519	.720	$p < 0.01$
H2e	Work life conflict - job dissatisfaction	.455	.674	$p < 0.01$
H2f	Work life conflict - job stress	.701	.837	$p < 0.01$
H2g	Work life conflict – lower productivity	.332	.576	$p < 0.01$
H2h	Work life conflict – parental dissatisfaction	.372	.610	$p < 0.01$
H2i	Work life conflict – marital dissatisfaction	.561	.749	$p < 0.01$
H2j	Work life conflict – societal dissatisfaction	.013	.115	$p < 0.05$

Table 3: Result of simple regression of Hypotheses 2a to 2j

On the basis of content analysis of work and family research, Eby et al. (2005) classified the consequences of work family conflict into three parts; they are work consequences, family consequences, and physical and psychological health outcomes. Thus, on the basis of this classification, the researcher also tried to explore whether there is any correlation between the outcomes of work life conflict in this study. Hence, in the subsequent step, Principal component factor analysis was conducted with varimax rotation on the 10 negative outcomes of work life conflict, to verify if there is any inter-correlation between these outcomes.

The Determinant value for the factor analysis came out to be 0.002, which was significant, i.e. larger than .00001. KMO measure of sampling adequacy was much above .50, that is, .751 and was fairly significant. Bartlett's test of sphericity value was also significant (see Table 4). The diagonal values in the anti-image correlation table were also seen to be greater

Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
JS	.702		
JB	.864		
JD	.832		
LP	.503		
MD	.505		.754
PD	.416		.763
SD			.793
PS		.866	
PH		.810	
CF		.780	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Conceptually, it is proven that if an individual's physical and psychological health as well as family life is in poor condition, their work is also negatively affected (Kopelman et al., 1983; Duxbery and Higgins, 1991; Frone et al., 2002; Rotondo et al., 2003; Boyer et al., 2008). This fact became the basis for developing hypothesis 3 and 4. Subsequently, H3 and H4 were tested by regressing 'Impact on Individual' and 'Impact on Family' on 'Impact on Work' respectively. Both these hypotheses were accepted, and their respective scores are ($R^2 = .299$, standardized $\beta = .547$, $p < 0.01$) and ($R^2 = .250$, standardized $\beta = .500$, $p < 0.01$).

In the end, Hypothesis 5a, b, and c were tested to know whether the Impact on individual, work, and family have a significant relationship with reduced job performance. Also, another purpose was to know which of these three areas have the leading impact on reduced job performance. Multiple-regression was applied and it was found that job performance is mainly influenced by the 'Impact on Work' ($R^2 = .664$, standardized $\beta = .684$, $p < 0.01$). Comparatively, 'Impact on Individual' and 'Impact on Family' were less significant, and their scores are ($R^2 = .664$, standardized $\beta = .152$, $p < 0.01$) and ($R^2 = .664$, standardized $\beta = .070$, $p < 0.01$) respectively. Figure II shows the β coefficients or the standardized regression coefficients, which demonstrate the strength of relationship and also allows for a direct comparison between coefficients.

headache, sleep disturbances, annoyance etc. which later converts into job stress. They also believe that their married life gets disrupted by excessive work at home on laptops and extreme use of mobile phones. Attending calls late night or at odd hours irritates their spouse as well as other family members. Moreover, the feeling of job stress even sometimes converts into job burnout or job dissatisfaction.

Other than this, people are also highly dissatisfied with their physical health and mental health or psychosomatic symptoms, and cope with consequences like sleep disturbances, strain, unhappiness and depression. Along with these negative outcomes, IT employees also feel that they are not able to fulfill their responsibilities as a partner/ spouse and a parent well. This in turn reduces their productivity and efficiency. These negative outcomes altogether also have a negative impact on their job performance. This result was also consistent with the spillover theory of work life conflict, which says that work life conflict can lead to job stress or job dissatisfaction, which is capable of spilling over into the work environment of an individual, and adversely affect work outcomes such as job performance (Bartolome and Evans, 1980).

Recommendations:

Today's workplace is characterized by 24/7 work environment and excessive use of technological devices, because organizations want to maximize productivity. And this is possible only through extra hours of work by technological devices. But human beings have certain physical and psychological limitations. They cannot perform consistently without proper rest and renewal. Too much workload and pressure may have detrimental outcomes. It was found in the research that the employees of information technology industry of India, who are married and with children, strongly feel that excessive use of Ubiquitous technology tools has a negative impact on their work life balance. Thus, the first and foremost recommendation of the researcher is that the HR managers of IT industry should ensure that technological tools are used judiciously and with caution.

Employees who are married and have children have extra family liabilities, so this point should be considered, and they should not be compelled to work extra hours through Ubiquitous technology devices after the normal work hours. In this study, 61.17% employees agreed that they use Ubiquitous technology tools like cell phone, pager, blackberry or laptop very frequently to perform their job during non-work hours. Time is a limited resource, and if

on employees and mitigate the unnecessary usage of tools like laptops at home aft work hours. Daily goal setting, priority scheduling, and control of time can not on conflict between work and home life, but also increase productivity and job perfor employees.

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variables on work-family conflict and strain: a control perspective

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List of Publications, Conferences and Workshops

Research Publications in Journals:

1. "Antecedents, Consequences and Strategies for Work Life Balance" (2011), published in '*Personnel Today*', Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 23-31, ISBN: 0970-8504.
2. "Struggle to Juggle: Work life balance (WLB) of Hotel industry employees" (2012), published in '*Presidency Journal of Management Thought and Research*', Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 54-60, ISSN: 2229-5275.
3. "Coping Skill – A Tool for Work Life Balance in the Hotel Industry" (2012), published in '*Nirma University Journal of Business and Management Studies*', Vol. 7, No. 1&2, pp. 65-74, ISSN: 2249-5630.
4. "Work Life Conflict in Service Industry: Antecedents, Outcomes and Strategies" (2013), published in '*The Journal of Indian Management and Strategy (JIMS 8 M)*', Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 55-64, ISSN: 0973-9335.

Research Publications in Books:

1. "Global HR Benchmarking and its Implications on Employee's Performance: A Study of Indian Textile Industry" (2012), published in '*Enhancing Enterprise Competitiveness through Human Capital and Operations Management*', Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad, Excel India Publishers, pp. 275-287, ISBN: 978-93-81361-73-3.
2. "Coping Skill – A Tool for Work Life Balance: Study with Reference to Hotel Industry" (2012), published in '*Enhancing Enterprise Competitiveness through Human Capital and Operations Management*', Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad, Excel India Publishers, pp. 200-210, ISBN: 978-93-81361-73-3.

List of Conferences/ Seminars Attended and presented Research Paper(s):

1. International Conference on 'Global Recession to Global Recovery: Opportunity, Challenges and Strategies for Sustainable Growth' organized by Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad, from 05-07 January, 2012.
2. International Conference on 'Management Perspectives: Strategies for Business Continuity, Growth and Sustenance' organized by Amity Business School at Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur from 6-7 September, 2012.
3. National Conference on 'Interdisciplinary Education and Research' organized by Institute of Management Studies, BJS Rampuria Jain College, Bikaner, on 12 July, 2012.

4. National Conference on 'Paradigm Shift in Management Practices: Strategies for Growth, Sustenance and development' organized by Institute of Management Studies, BJS Rampuria Jain College, Bikaner, on 22-23 November, 2013, and presented a paper titled 'Organization-centered versus Individual-centered Career Planning: An Analytical study of Banking Industry of India'.
5. University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi sponsored National Conference on 'New Directions in Multi-Disciplinary Education' organized by Facuty of Management Studies, Lachoo Memorial College of Science and Technology, Jodhpur, on 15-16 February, 2014, and presented a paper titled 'Problems in Indian Management Education: A Study of Managers of Rajasthan'.

List of Workshops/ FDPs Attended:

1. International workshop on 'Statistical Modelling for Data Analysis' organized by 'Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur' during 20-26 December, 2010.
2. International workshop on 'Tools and Techniques in Statistics and Simulation' organized by 'Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani' from 29 September to 1 October, 2011.
3. National workshop on 'Excellence in Teaching' organized by 'Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur' on 5 December, 2013.
4. Faculty Development Program (FDP) on 'Research Essentials using SPSS, MS-Word, Zotero and EBSCO' organized by 'Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Management and Research, New Delhi' from 10 to 14 April, 2014.